

The Gracious Welcome

by Horatius Bonar

Jesus invites us to bring others near to Him, despite our unbelief and perversity, so that He can pour out His love and bless us.

Scripture: Matthew 17:17, Luke 5:31, Hebrews 7:25

Topics: "Grace", "Healing"

Description

Horatius Bonar emphasizes the gracious welcome of Christ, who, despite the unbelief of His disciples, commands them to bring the afflicted to Him. He illustrates that no case is too difficult for Jesus, who remains unchanged in His love and power to heal. Bonar highlights that Christ desires personal contact with us, inviting us to come near and to bring others to Him for healing and blessing. The sermon reassures that even in our faithlessness, Jesus is eager to bless and save, demonstrating His omnipotent grace. Ultimately, Bonar calls us to draw near to Christ and share His love with others.

Transcript

"Bring him hither to me."--Matthew 17:17.

1. Whose words are these? They are Christ's own. They are authoritative words. He commands. He has just come down from the transfiguration hill, and what a contrast between that mountain glory and this vale of tears and disease; but he returns to his old work of healing and blessing, just as before. The glory has not changed Him. And so with Him now in the midst of that glory. It has not altered his love. He is the same Saviour still; as ready to receive sinners as in the days of his flesh.

2. To whom are they spoken. To his unbelieving disciples. Their faith was small indeed, and they are rebuked for it; they are called a "faithless and perverse generation." Yet He does not, on their account, repel the poor possessed lunatic, nay, He makes them the instrument of bringing the sick man nigh. How easily can the love and power of Jesus break through all barriers, and find their way to the sinner through a wall of unbelief!

3. Concerning whom are they spoken? A poor lunatic, possessed with a devil. It is one of the worst cases that has come before Him, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." But best or worst, what matters it to Him who created the heavens and the earth; who is Lord of principalities and powers; master of Satan and his angels; who has the keys of hell and death. Others had failed; He could not fail. In this confidence He speaks. The worst case is nothing to Him.

4. What do they teach us? Much indeed. (1.) Something as to Christ; (2.) Something as to ourselves.

(1.) Something as to Christ He is the great healer; the sinner's one physician. His words are health. His touch is health. His look is health. Nay, his very garments are health; for as many as touch either Him or them are made perfectly whole. Leprosy, lunacy, fever, blindness, death, possession by Satan, are nothing to Him. In Him all fullness dwells; and that fullness is dispensed by love. There was much here to quench that love, much to repel Him, but He will not be repelled, and his love cannot be quenched, even by the waters of unbelief. He is "mighty to save"--"able to save to the uttermost." Omnipotence is in his touch, his look, his word. Let us do justice to his fullness and his grace, lest He have to say of us, O faithless and perverse generation.

(2.) Something as to ourselves. He comes looking for faith, but finds only unbelief; looking for child-like simplicity, and He finds only perversity. Yet He invites us still. He invites us to come ourselves, and He invites us to bring others. What He desires is personal contact with Himself. In one sense distance is nothing to Him, but in another it is. He wants to have us near Him. For He speaks and acts as very man. And, besides, whatever might be His power to heal or to pardon at a distance, He knows that nearness to Him is our blessedness. Contact with Him is health, and life, and warmth. Creeds, doctrines, truths, words, are all good in their way, but they are not the living Jesus, nor can they be substitutes for Him and for His love. But into this close contact He invites us to bring others, "Bring him hither to me." He does not say, "Come," neither does He say, "I will go to him;" He says, "Bring him." And was any "brought one" ever sent away? Each coming one gets the blessing, and each brought one too. In the present case this is the more remarkable, because there was little faith (if any) in any of the parties concerned. Yet Jesus must warn and bless, not for our sake, but for His own. In spite of sin and unbelief and perversity He must bless!

Such is the Christ with whom we have to do, full of grace and truth. Let us draw near; let us keep near; let us allow Him to pour out His love on us; let us bring others to Him to be partakers of the same overflowing love.

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